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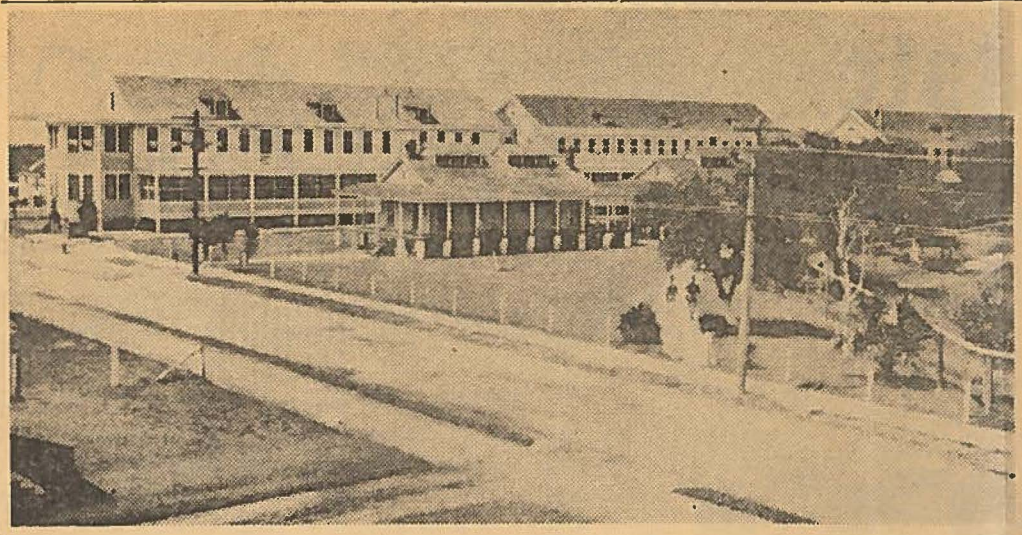
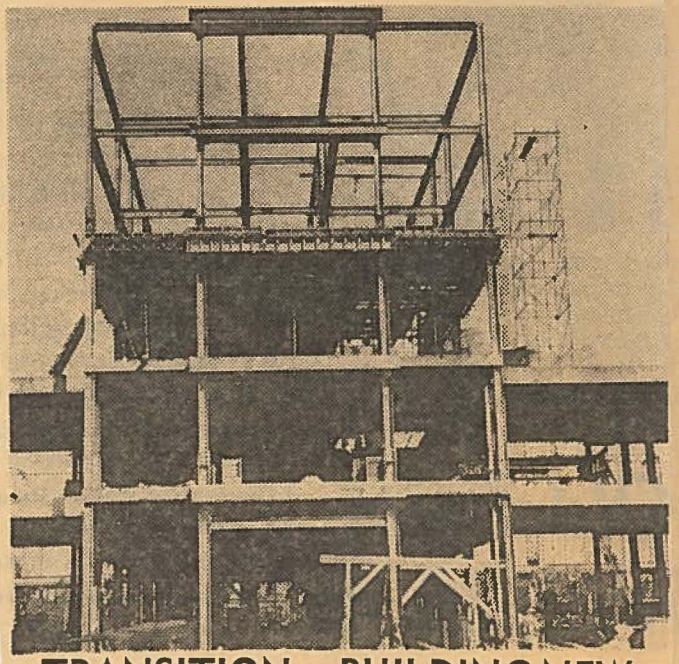


OLD HOSPITAL ON PARRIS ISLAND, CIRCA 1891 . . . .



. . TRANSITION . . BUILDING NEW . .

$13-MILLION STRUCTURE

Beaufort Naval Hospital Eleven Years Old Today

By LCpl. Tom Mason

Twenty-four cots housed in two portable wood and canvas buildings are a far cry from the $13-million-dollar ultra-modern U.S. Naval Hospital in Beaufort today, but that is the way it began sixty-nine years ago.

Actually the present hospital building celebrates its eleventh anniversary today after being commissioned on April 29, 1949 . . . the hospital's forerunner was on Parris Island when the Island was a Naval Station in 1891.

Today's hospital, in comparison, treats an average of 4,000 out patients alone per month. Three to four hundred patients a month are admitted to the hospital.

It is now one of the most modern medical facilities in the Southeastern U.S., with 458 actual beds set up. Hospital officials explain that such figures fluctuate, and the hospital does not operate to capacity constantly . . . on the other hand, in time of emergency, facilities may be expanded greatly and rapidly.

The Beaufort Naval Hospital is commanded by Captain Paul K. Perkins, a veteran of 29 years service in the Navy Medical Corps and extensive combat in two wars.

Commissioned in the Medical Corps in 1931, Capt. Perkins received his bachelor of arts degree from the University of North Carolina. He subsequently graduated from Rush Medical College of the University of Chicago and the graduate medical school of the University of Pennsylvania. Capt. Perkins is a Diplomate of the American Board of Surgery and a Fellow of the American College.

Parris Island was the site of the first medical activity in 1891, and in 1916, when the Island was turned over to the Corps, it was necessary to enlarge the medical facility to handle the increased personnel that came with recruit training.

At that time there were over 1,600 personnel here. Their medical needs were met in two wards of 22 beds each.

Following the Armistice in 1918, the facility grew into a four-ward building caring for 88 patients.

Capt. Perkins

Until 1941 there was little change.

A disastrous storm in 1940 seriously damaged the buildings and

Officials say last year was the "bumper" year on record, with a total of 701 births during 1959.

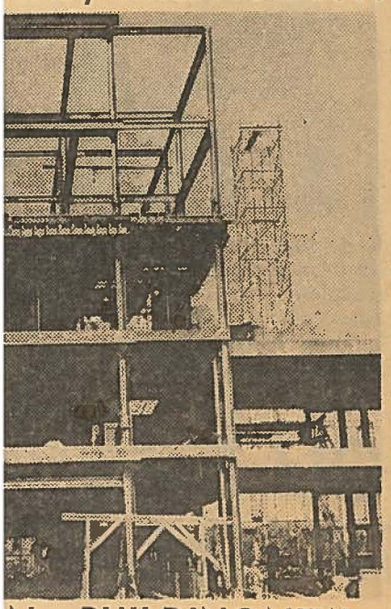
Patients receiving treatment at the hospital are admitted to modern air-conditioned wards or they make use of such comfort items as motion pictures each night, a barber shop, beauty shop, a Navy Exchange Store and a soda fountain with a book and magazine stand. The hospital library, filled with the latest books, is available, along with recreation and television rooms.

The hospital librarian, assisted by volunteer Grey Ladies of the Red Cross, makes routine rounds to all wards with a book cart. The ladies make every effort to make a patient's period of hospitalization more comfortable.

In addition, the hospital has an organized recreational program supervised by trained Red Cross personnel who direct activities, and help publish a weekly hospital newspaper. They also assist in handicarft work and scheduled entertainment, highlighted by afternoon motion pictures shown in the wards for non-ambulatory patients.

New 'Dog Tag' May Even Have Mugshot on It

AND, CIRCA 1891 . . . .



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Capt. Perkins heads a staff of 367 medical, civilian and Marine Corps personnel. The staff includes 21 Navy doctors, a Navy dentist, 24 Navy nurses and 24 Medical Service Corps officers (administrative).

In addition, the hospital has attached to it a Supply Corps Officer, a Navy Chaplain and a Naval Corps of Engineers officer.

There are 151 enlisted Hospital Corpsmen and one dental technician assigned to the hospital. Civilian employes number 146. The staff is completed by two enlisted Marines, three other enlisted Navymen and three American Red Cross workers.

Since being commissioned, the hospital has treated more than 43,000 patients. In addition to the 4,000 monthly average for "out" patients, three to four hundred per month are actually hospitalized.

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At that time there were over 1,600 personnel here. Their medical needs were met in two wards of 22 beds each.

Following the Armistice in 1918, the facility grew into a four-ward building caring for 88 patients.

Capt. Perkins

Until 1941 there was little change.

A disastrous storm in 1940 seriously damaged the buildings and plans for further extension had to be altered. With the inception of the Naval Air Station in 1942, patient pressure increased and consideration was given a new modern hospital.

The present site, on the Beaufort River two miles north of Parris Island, was obtained, and ground broken in 1946 by Congressman L. Mendel Rivers.

The average hospital stay for dependents is estimated at six days, while military personnel average a 17-day stay. This is due to the high input of recruit personnel, who must be in perfect physical condition before being released to training.

A high percentage of persons not actually counted at the hospital are the new-born who do not appear on the records for treatment.

Since the Hospital's opening 11 years ago, there have been an estimated 4,300 babies born there. Officials say last year was the "bumper" year on record, with a total of 701 births during 1959.

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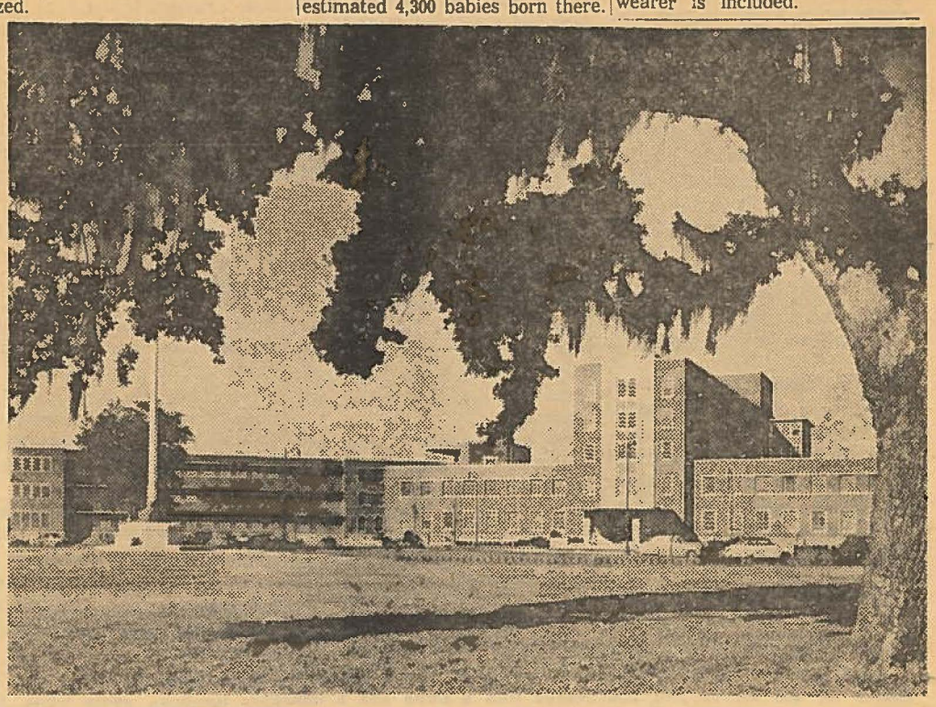
New 'Dog Tag' May Even Have Mugshot on It

Some FMF Lant Marines are now sporting "futuristic" dog tags which tells all and may even include a mugshot of the wearer, according to a recent NAVY TIMES article.

Including up to 22 lines of information from name, rank, serial number and enlistment contract data, the new ID tags are fashioned after the popular charge-a-plates used by department stores and other mercantile establishments. They are being tested by the FMF units.

Easily printed on lists and official papers, the tag information would be useful in cutting down administrative paper work, the Corps believes.

A second charge-a-plate being tested by Marines, the TIMES said, contains the same information found on present ID cards. A small, laminated card bearing a photo and signature of the wearer is included.



. . . . ULTRA-MODERN BEAUFORT HOSPITAL, IN 1949